

Historic, Archive Document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.

1.9
H-755A
THE HOUSEHOLD GARDEN CALENDAR

--Interview between
Miss Van Deman, and
Mr. W. R. Beattie.

Home Vegetable Garden

A radio interview between Miss Ruth Van Deman, Bureau of Home Economics, and Mr. W. R. Beattie, Bureau of Plant Industry, delivered in the Department of Agriculture period of the National Farm and Home Hour, broadcast by a network of 48 associate NBC stations, Tuesday, April 12, 1932.

MISS VAN DEMAN: How do you do, Everybody:

Judging from reports that are coming to us, a lot of people are going to grow some of their own vegetables this summer and can the surplus for next winter. For a good supply of home grown vegetables is like health insurance in these days when food money is scarce. So Mr. Beattie and I decided to combine the Garden Calendar and the Household Calendar today.

Before we get down to garden plans, Mr. Beattie, what were those figures you mentioned the other day about the value of garden plots, I mean the cash value of the vegetables from a summer's work?

MR. BEATTIE: Oh yes, Miss Van Deman, you mean those records kept by several hundred community gardeners a few years ago. They had plots about 50 by 100 feet in size, or less than one-eighth of an acre, and on the average they got a return of about \$85 per plot. At the time they kept these records prices were considerably higher than now; so on our present scale, this would mean about \$50 per plot. Some of these plots produced over \$200 worth of vegetables during the season. It all depended upon how much time and attention the gardens received. Most of these community gardeners spent about 100 hours, and in terms of present prices for vegetables they paid themselves about 50 cents an hour.

MISS VAN DEMAN: Well, those community gardeners certainly found that it paid to grow their own vegetables. Now how about gardens on the farm? Have you any records for them?

MR. BEATTIE: Yes, plenty of them. Records kept by the home demonstration agents in several States in 1931 show that the gardens saved families from \$75 to \$300 on their family food bills for the year. I could give you figures from Pennsylvania, Missouri, South Carolina, Florida, and almost any State, North or South. All of these prove the value of gardens in dollars and cents.

MISS VAN DEMAN: Yes, and I could add something about their value in terms of good nutrition. But we must be getting on with our garden plans. First of all, Mr. Beattie, how large a garden do you recommend for the average farm family? I mean a garden that will furnish fresh vegetables all summer and provide a surplus for canning and storing.

MR. BEATTIE: In general I believe about half an acre, not allowing for all of the corn and potatoes and perhaps the pumpkins and squashes. One-half acre will provide for all of the more intensive crops and usually give you a fair surplus for canning. Of course, a good deal depends on how you keep the garden working.

MISS VAN DEMAN: Now, Mr. Beattie, how do you divide up that half-acre garden? I noticed you planting peas in your garden the other evening. How much of your

(over)

half acre do you plant in peas?

MR. BEATTIE: About one-tenth of my space, or three rows the full length of my garden. That gives us plenty of fresh peas for the table while they are in season, also a fair supply of high quality peas for canning. Peas are an early crop and must be planted and gathered early before the hot weather. Just as soon as the peas are off I set about 100 tomato plants on this ground to supply us with tomatoes for late summer and canning. That makes a good combination in this part of the country and farther north, but in the South you must plant your tomatoes early and get your crop before the extremely hot weather. Also I always plant a row of very early tomatoes for table use.

MISS VAN DEMAN: You got ahead of me on my next question. I was just going to ask you about tomatoes. I consider tomatoes one of the best and one of the easiest vegetables to can at home. So what varieties of tomatoes do you recommend?

MR. BEATTIE: There are several good varieties, Miss Van Deman. During recent years we have been recommending the varieties that are wilt resistant especially for the South where the wilt disease is quite prevalent. For a general purpose tomato I think the Marglobe is one of the best in most parts of the country. It is wilt resistant, a good grower, and the fruits are medium size, generally quite smooth, and have a deep red flesh that makes them excellent for canning. Break O'Day is another new variety that is good for the home garden. It is a little earlier than Marglobe but is a good canning tomato. There are so many good varieties of tomatoes that it is hard to say which is best.

MISS VAN DEMAN: Well, so much for tomatoes and peas. What do you recommend for snap beans and Lima beans?

MR. BEATTIE: First of all, plenty of them. I always make three or four plantings of early snap beans and I plant about double what I think we will need for use while they are fresh. That gives us a surplus to can. Giant Stringless Green-pod and Early Bountiful are good, and Round-pod, Kidney Wax or Brittle Wax for a wax bean. We also make about two plantings of late snap beans for fall use.

But, we don't depend entirely upon the bush or snap beans; we plant a row or two of Kentucky Wonder pole beans. We like the Kentucky Wonder for a snap bean and for canning; then later we save the ripened beans and shell them for winter. We follow the same general plan with our Lima beans; first we plant a row of the little Sieva beans because they come on early. A little later or as soon as the ground is warm we plant a row of Fordhook Bush and another row of the big pole Limas. We can do that here in our climate, but the large pole and bush Limas don't do so well in the South. We save the dry Lima beans for winter and whenever we have a surplus of the green Limas we can then, but they must be taken while they are young and tender.

MISS VAN DEMAN: Golden Bantam sweet corn, did you say? That's the kind I plant for my early crop, but then there are a great many very good varieties of sweet corn to choose from. There's the Black Mexican, for example, one of the sweetest and best. Then we have the Country Gentleman and the Evergreen, two very excellent sorts for second and late planting. Now, we don't try to grow all of our sweet corn in the garden, but we have a generous patch in a field near the house where we can grow plenty for canning and drying.

MISS VAN DEMAN: To go back to beans and peas, what do you think about black-eyed peas in the garden?

MR. BEATTIE: Blackeyed peas are really a southern crop but you can often grow them considerably north of Washington. And how they do yield; and they are excellent dried. Blackeyed peas also help when it comes to making succotash.

MISS VAN DEMAN: Or with a little rice added to your peas you have "Hoppin John" if you live in South Carolina. Speaking of Southern dishes, what about okra for gumbo?

MR. BEATTIE: Yes, we grow plenty of okra in our garden, and then we can the okra and tomatoes together. In fact we grow the okra and tomatoes side by side in the garden and every time we pick our tomatoes we pick the young, tender pods of the okra and into the cans they go. This mixture certainly is good in soups. You can grow okra as far north as southern New York and southern Michigan. The pods of the okra must be gathered and used while they are very young and tender, say not over two days after the blossoms shed. You can dry the tender pods of the okra on screens over the stove. Or you can string the okra pods on threads, and hang them up to dry. Dried okra will keep almost indefinitely.

MISS VAN DEMAN: Yes, there are a number of vegetables that are better dried or stored than canned. Also, certain vegetables can be brined or pickled. Are there some special varieties of cucumbers that you recommend for pickling?

MR. BEATTIE: Yes, there are special pickling varieties of cucumbers like Snow's Pickling, and Chicago Pickling. It often pays to plant a few hills of one of the regular pickling varieties. I forgot to mention it while I was on tomatoes, but of course there will be plenty of small green tomatoes from your regular late crop for making green tomato pickles. The same is true of peppers; you can use the later or small pods for pickling or brining.

MISS VAN DEMAN: Do you realize, Mr. Beattie, that we haven't said a word about onions, beets, carrots, or cabbage? I'm afraid some body will be thinking that this is not a very well-planned garden.

MR. BEATTIE: You're right, and they are all very important crops from a storage standpoint. Of course, we want onions in our gardens, and as for cabbage I always plant about three rows of late cabbage for storing or making into kraut.

Now, I want to ask you a question, Miss Van Deman. Have you any suggestions to offer on the canning of garden vegetables?

MISS VAN DEMAN: Yes, as I remarked in passing, tomatoes are the easiest of all the garden vegetables to can. All they need is a hot pack and a brief processing in a boiling water bath. For peas, beans, and the other non-acid vegetables processing in the pressure cooker is the only safe way. So, if you are planning to can these vegetables this summer and you haven't a pressure cooker of your own, you might arrange with some of your neighbors to get one on a cooperative plan.

If you want to check up on canning equipment now, send to the United States Department of Agriculture for a copy of Farmers' Bulletin No. 1471. It tells all about the containers for fruits and vegetables, the pressure cooker, and all the other equipment you need. Also it gives time tables and detailed

directions for handling everything from asparagus to sweet potatoes and from strawberries to apples. A little later I am going to bring one of the canning specialists over to give you the latest facts on home canning. But if you have canning questions now, send them to the Bureau of Home Economics. And I am sure that Mr. Beattie will be glad to answer your questions on growing garden crops.

Next week, Dr. Stanley will be here to tell you about planning the modern home kitchen. Goodbye for this time.

MR. BEATTIE: Yes, Miss Van Deman, I will be only too glad to answer gardening questions, and by the way, we have a new Farm Garden bulletin that tells how to grow more than sixty different kinds of vegetables. It is Farmers' Bulletin No. 1-6-7-3. Now we will be glad to send you a copy of this bulletin on request, but the supply is limited and so if you do get a copy I hope you will carefully preserve it in your bulletin library. In planning our talk today Miss Van Deman and I felt that it is highly important that you folks who live on farms, and others who have gardens, should arrange to grow not only plenty of fresh vegetables for use during the summer and fall, but in addition a surplus for drying, canning and storing for winter. If we can be of service to you either in the growing or the preserving of your garden products, don't fail to call upon us. That's what we are here for. So long until next Tuesday.